

Interagency Workshop on
**Integrating Biodiversity and Ecosystems Information Systems:
Transparency, Participation & Collaboration**

29 – 30 June 2009

- The workshop was attended by 39 persons representing 16 agencies, the Smithsonian Institution and 1 NGO (Consortium for the Barcode of Life)
- Keynote speakers included **Ann Bartuska**, Acting Undersecretary of the USDA for Natural Resources and Environment, and **Cristián Samper**, Director of the National Museum of Natural History. There were 9 other speakers, each from a different agency.
- Participants in the breakout discussions provided a great deal of thought and input into what will become the workshop report (draft due 15 August). They especially noted that
 - There are many job-creating, biologically related issues in the public eye at this point in time, and
 - All of these require the ability to combine information across scales (local, regional, landscape) and across agencies (USFS, USGS, FWS, NOAA, EPA and many others).
 - With ecosystem services being viewed in a market sense, reliable information systems are more and more critical – the market will not tolerate uncertainty.
 - Combining and utilizing data and information across the government can only be done efficiently by applying
 - state-of-the-art technologies such as service-oriented architectures, and
 - smart, coordinated and cooperative investments that avoid duplication of effort across agencies.
- In plenary discussion, the workshop participants concluded that it will be important to have both
 - Bottom-up innovation
 - Joint projects that benefit several agencies and the public, while respecting individual agency mandates; and
 - Sharing of software, protocols, standards and procedures across agencies
 - Top-down facilitation:
 - Budgets and funding made contingent on application of agreed-upon informatics standards for data and metadata (such as those developed by the FGDC); and
 - Investment in state-of-the-art technologies such as service-oriented architectures that serve many agencies and the public at the same time
- Outcomes of the workshop
 - Workshop report will be prepared (draft due 15 August)
 - Agreement to participate in the development of an inventory of existing USG agency databases and information systems relevant to biodiversity and ecosystems, as a step toward an online registry
 - Commitment to develop a joint demonstration project among several of the agencies represented at the workshop (perhaps to be shown at the GEO Plenary in November)